

as the age of puberty is approached, but none of the patients admitted into the hospital, had attained that period.

M. Rufz has seen four cases of death supervening during the continuance of chorea, and quotes two other fatal cases—one of them on the authority of the writer of this notice. In the case which we communicated to the author, death took place from the extreme violence of the irregular movements of the whole muscular system. In none of these six cases was any appreciable lesion discovered in the cerebro-spinal organs, although they were examined with great care by persons accustomed to researches of pathological anatomy. The lesions of other organs were very various, and apparently dependent upon the accidental disease, which, in most of the cases, was the cause of death.

Treatment.—At the Children's Hospital, the physicians were in the habit of treating chorea by cold baths, tonics, &c. with success, but the cure was slow, and frequently so protracted, that it was doubtful whether the termination of the disease was not owing to the unaided efforts of nature. M. Baudelocque, one of the physicians of the hospital, introduced the use of sulphur baths, made by dissolving four ounces of sulphuret of potassa in sixteen buckets of water, (equal to about ten or twelve of the size used in this country.) A bath was given five times a week; that is as often as the arrangement of the hospital permitted it. In fourteen cases, treated by these sulphur baths, there were thirteen cures. The mean duration of their residence at the hospital was twenty-four days, while the mean duration of the patients previously to the different methods employed, was thirty-one days. A diminution of the symptoms occurred after the second or third bath, and it was rarely necessary to give more than ten or twelve. In one case the cure was complete after the fifth bath. Other trials of the sulphur bath were made by the physicians of the Children's Hospital—many of these cases I have witnessed. At the Pennsylvania Hospital, there were treated four cases of chorea, during the past summer. In three of these cases, trial was made of the sulphur baths; some difficulty existed from the want of a suitable apartment where the baths could be taken without incommoding the patients in the adjoining wards. Some baths were, however, given with manifest advantage. The *actea racemosa*, or black snakeroot, was prescribed in doses of from ten to fifteen grains, four times a day. The cases are scarcely numerous enough to appreciate the value of this remedy.

W. W. G.

XVII. *Recherches Médico-Légales sur l'Incertitude des Signes de la Mort, les Dangers des Inhumations Précipitées, les Moyens de Constater les décès et de Rappeler à la vie ceux qui sont en état de mort Apparente.* Par M. JULIA DE FONTENELLE, Professeur de Chimie Médicale, &c. &c. &c. Paris, 1834, pp. 352, 8vo.

The subjects of Mr. Fontenelle's researches have long attracted the notice of the medical profession, and year after year works have appeared, well-calculated to direct the attention of the public to the dangers attendant on premature interments, yet whatever may have been the momentary impression produced by them, the world is still content to pursue the course which fashion or convenience has dictated; and in most civilized countries the scarcely cold remains of relatives and friends are hurried to the grave, without an attempt

being made to ascertain whether the vital spark is really extinguished, or is merely in a latent state.

It is not our intention to analyze this treatise in detail; we shall, at present, merely notice its plan, and the distribution of its contents in a cursory manner, at the same time recommending it to the attentive perusal of our readers, with the hope that some one among them may be induced to undertake a translation of it, and thus by rendering it accessible to all classes of the community, and awakening them to a sense of the horrors to which they are individually exposed, probably lead to the adoption of measures calculated to obviate the evil.

The work is divided into five parts; the first containing the author's views on life and death, which may be stated in a few words. He considers vitality as the *agent*, and not the *result* of organization, or to use his own words, "as that emanation from the divinity which gives effect to organization." In this part, and in an appendix, he offers some strong facts and arguments in support of the opinion of Sæmmering and others, that death by decapitation is one of the most painful ever devised for the execution of criminals, and that instead of all sensation ceasing on the separation of the head from the body, that the former experiences the most horrible agonies until the almost total extinction of its vital heat.

The second part treats of the uncertainty of the signs of death, and demonstrates that no one of them is of sufficient validity for us to decide with certainty that death is really and truly extinct, and even a concurrence of the whole of them, with the exception of decomposition, may mislead. There can be no doubt, that many persons have been allowed to perish, who might have been restored to the enjoyment of a protracted existence; and hence it is our duty to prevent, if possible, such horrible results of ignorance or inattention, by ascertaining what criteria are to be depended upon in doubtful cases. This has been so clearly and satisfactorily accomplished in the work before us, that an attention to its precepts will, in most cases, prevent any danger from a premature interment.

In the third part we are presented with a great number of instances in which unfortunate individuals have been hurried to the tomb in a state of suspended animation, where they have revived only to experience the agonies of a second and far more agonizing death. That this takes place far oftener than is generally supposed, and more especially in times of public sickness, there can be no doubt, when we advert to the number of well-authenticated cases detailed in the various records of our art. We are aware that the credulity of mankind and their love for the horrible and wonderful, have greatly exaggerated these cases; but when we consider how seldom it is possible to verify the fact of actual death at the time of interment, it must be evident that the relative proportion of those thus buried alive, has been so great as to require an observance of the utmost circumspection before we decide on committing a body to the grave.

The fourth part is devoted to the consideration of those diseases or states of the *living* body which produce a condition resembling death, and are too often mistaken for it. It would extend this notice to too great a length to attempt to speak of them in detail; we will merely state that this portion of Mr. Fontenelle's work is highly instructive, and contains numerous cases in illustration of his views, which deserve attention.

In the fifth part the author points out the modes in which the decease of individuals should be legally verified. In this country, as in most others, the laws on this head are very lax and inefficient, and require a scrupulous revision, but as even the most experienced may oftentimes be deceived, and the only plan which promises complete security is that adopted in many of the cities of Germany at the suggestion of the celebrated Hufeland, a full account of which is appended to the present work. It consists in the establishment of houses for the reception of bodies, in different parts of a town, where they are kept till unequivocal symptoms of decomposition begin to manifest themselves; wires connected with bells are attached to the feet and hands, so that the slightest motion in the body would be revealed. A physician is attached to each establishment, whose duty it is to examine the bodies, and to sign orders for their interment. If evidences of life manifest themselves, every exertion is used to restore animation.

The work terminates by a succinct but excellent detail of the means to be employed in cases of apparent death, whether from disease or accident, and a description of the apparatus for this purpose. R. E. G.

XVIII. *Organon der Heilkunst*. VON SAMUEL HAHNEMANN, "Aude Sapere." Fünfte verbessert und vermehrte Auflage, mit dem Bildnisse des Verfassers. Dresden und Leipzig, 1833, 8vo. pp. 304.

Organon of Medical Science. By SAMUEL HAHNEMANN, "Aude Sapere." Fifth improved and augmented edition, with the portrait of the author. Dresden and Leipzig, 1833.

The Homœopathic Medical Doctrine, or "Organon of the Healing Art," a new System of Physic. Translated from the German of S. HAHNEMANN, by CHARLES H. DEVRIENT, Esq. with notes by SAMUEL STRATTEN, M. D. Dublin, 1833, 8vo. pp. 332.

Five-and-twenty years have passed away since the founder of the "Homœopathic Medical Doctrine" first propounded his singular opinions in the authoritative form of *Organon der Rationellen Heilkunde*—"Organon of Rational Medical Science." The book was issued from the Dresden press, but it did not at first attract, in a marked manner, the attention of physicians. In 1819 a second edition appeared under its present title. The epithet *rationellen*, or "rational," whether from modesty, or instinctive misgivings on the part of the author, having been omitted. Since that time, it has passed through two other editions, and is now, as the title at the head of this notice indicates, in its "fifth improved and augmented."

It is not our intention, in the present brief bibliographical notice, to inquire into the merits of this singular doctrine. This has already been done at some length.*

From homœopathy, as well as from every medical system, "rational" or irrational, some wise pathological and therapeutical deductions may be drawn, although we may be disposed to smile at the strange conceits which are encouraged by all of them; and if no other inferences were to be deduced from the system of Hahnemann, it would at least encourage us not to neglect too much.

* See Vol. VII. p. 467.